

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached annotated sheet of drawings indicates changes to Figure 6. The attached Replacement sheet, which includes Figure 6, replaces the original sheet including Figure 6.

REMARKS

In view of the preceding amendments and the comments which follow, and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, amendment and reconsideration of the Office Action, mailed on January 3, 2005 is respectfully requested by Applicant.

Summary

Claims 1 – 9 stand rejected. Claims 1 – 9 have been amended. Claim 10 has been added. No new matter has been introduced as a result of the amendment.

Claims 1 - 10 are pending following entry of the present amendments and remarks.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings, namely Fig. 6, as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4). This drawing objection emanates from the reference numeral "18a" being used to designate both constriction and knurled portions in Fig. 6. Applicant has amended Fig. 6 by appropriately designating the knurled portion with reference numeral "18b", as supported in the specification (See page 16, lines 13 – 21).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this drawing objection be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 – 3 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Wegner (U.S. Patent 6,101,893). Although, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the invention and to remove any ambiguities that may have been the basis for these rejections.

Claim 1 is directed to an input apparatus. The input apparatus has an exterior decoration plate, an operation lever positioned inside the exterior decoration plate, a detection unit to detect an operating condition of the operation lever, and a control unit to control a monitor displaying functions in accordance with an output signal outputted from the detection unit.

Amended Claim 1 recites that a push-pull operation is allowed in an axial direction of the operation lever with a neutral position of the operation knob as a reference, and that the push-pull operation of the operation knob selectively operates two switches.

Applicant submits that Wergen fails to teach or disclose the Claim 1 arrangement of the push-pull operation of the operation knob. Wergen states:

"This actuation rod 14 is suspended free to pivot at its end 15 remote from the base 12 on a central rod 14 for absorbing and transferring transverse and flexural forces introduced into it manually. This actuation rod 14 is suspended free to pivot at its end 15 remote from the base 12 on a central rod 16, which in turn is mounted free to pivot on the end 17 of the base 12 which is remote from the actuation rod 14"

Wergen further states:

"For the third dimension, however, it is preferable that on the upper end 15 of the actuation rod 14 an additional, likewise counterbalanced two-armed pivot lever 27 with sensors 22 be arranged in a surrounding housing 28. The lever 27 can be operated by means of the thumb gripping the actuation rod 14 during the transverse and tilting stressing of the actuation rod 14, that is, likewise placed under vertical stress (and perhaps even transverse to this direction), without displacement and free of play, at its freely accessible lever arm."

Wergen's knob is fixedly positioned on the operational lever (actuation rod) while configured to accommodate internally a counterbalanced two-armed pivot lever. This two-armed pivot lever is operated in an axial direction (vertical stress) of the operational lever, instead of the knob. Thus, Wergen's knob is fixedly limited to the transverse and rotational actuations of the operational lever. Accordingly, Wergen fails to disclose a knob that is actuated in an axial direction of the operational lever, and independently of the operational lever.

Claim 1 is not anticipated by Wergen, and thus allowable. Dependent Claims 2, 3 and 9 are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has next rejected Claims 4 - 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Wegner in view of Presently (U.S. Patent 3,818,154).

Applicant also submits that the following reference combinations, Wergen and Presently may not properly be combined to reject Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) because Wergen fails to teach or suggest the claimed structure of the knob.

As discussed above, Wegner failed to anticipate Claim 1. Since the limitations of Claim 1 are implicitly included in Claim 4, the Presently reference may not properly be combined with Wegner to reject Claim 4. Thus, Claim 4 is allowable.

Using a similar discussion, Applicants submit that Claim 5 is also allowable Wergen and Presently, taken singly or in combination with each other. Thus, Claim 5 is allowable.

The Examiner has next rejected Claims 6 - 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Wegner.

As discussed above, Wegner failed to anticipate Claim 1. Since the limitations of Claim 1 are implicitly included in each of indirectly dependent Claims 6 – 8, Claims 6 – 8 are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

Conclusion

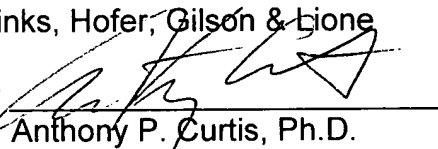
Applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance, and favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and remarks is respectfully requested. Allowance of Claims 1 - 10 at an early date is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes a one-month extension is due, and a corresponding check is enclosed. If, there are any fees due, Applicant requests that this paper constitutes any necessary petition and authorizes the Commissioner to charge any underpayment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 23-1925.

If the examiner finds that there are any outstanding issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 6

"18a" to be
replaced by
"18b"

